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in an organizational context

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Intentions to engage in organizational change

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Abstract

This study utilized the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to understand employee change readiness. The extent to which attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control predicted employees' intentions to carry out activities that were supportive of a change event were investigated. The impact of group norm was examined as a further predictor of change-related intentions. The context of the research was a sample of 82 employees in the early stages of a re-brand. Results indicated that direct measures of attitude and subjective norm, as well as group norm, emerged as significant predictors of employees' intentions to perform re-brand behaviors. To capture the indirect beliefs underlying attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, participants also provided an assessment of their behavioral, normative, and control beliefs in regards to the change event, respectively. A series of MANOVAs revealed significant differences between moderate and high intenders on a range of underlying beliefs. Findings are discussed in terms of the application of the TPB for effective change management.

KEY WORDS: Theory of Planned Behavior, organizational change, readiness for change, intentions

Organizational change management is concerned with facilitating the process of change through modification of strategies, structures, and processes, with many authors emphasizing that the support of employees is central to determining whether change initiatives will succeed or fail (Cummings & Worley, 2005). In this regard, researchers have directed their attention to the notion of readiness for change, with a growing body of empirical evidence indicating that change readiness perceptions lead to better post-change outcomes (e.g., Jones, Jimmieson, & Griffiths, 2005; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Readiness for change can be defined as the extent to which employees hold positive views about the need for organizational change, as well as the extent to which employees believe that such changes are likely to have positive implications for themselves and the wider organization (Armenakis, Harris, & Feild, 1999; Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993). Armenakis et al. (1993) noted that readiness for change is the cognitive precursor to employee behaviors that either support, or resist, a specific change initiative. More recently, Holt, Armenakis, Harris, and Feild (2007) provided a broad definition of readiness for change, describing it as a comprehensive attitude that is influenced simultaneously by (1) content, (2) process, (3) context, and (4) individuals involved; and collectively reflects the extent to which an individual is cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept a plan to purposefully alter the status quo (p. 326).

In a similar vein, Piderit (2000) recommended that future research would benefit from assessing reactions to change as a function of attitudes, whereby researchers distinguish among cognitions, emotions, and intentions (and/or behaviors). First, employee reactions to organizational change constitute cognitions, in terms of the beliefs and thoughts (either positive or negative) that employees may have about a specific change event at work. Second, arising from defensive routines, employees may experience a variety of emotions during organizational change (e.g., anxiety or excitement). Third, Piderit noted that some authors tend to think of readiness for change in behavioral terms. In this study, it is proposed that the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a useful approach for better understanding the reactions of employees during times of organizational change. The research aim was to apply the TPB framework in an organizational change context by examining the role of (1) attitude, (2) subjective norm, and (3) perceived behavioral control (PBC) in the

prediction of employees' intentions to engage in specific behaviors that support a planned change event. The context for the study was an organization undergoing a change in ownership that resulted in the re-branding of the company.

The Theory of Planned Behavior

Similar to other cognitive decision-making models, the underlying premise of the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) is that individuals make decisions rationally and systematically through information available to them (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). According to the TPB, intentions are the most proximal determinant of behavior and are determined through a logical sequence of cognitions (see Figure 1). In the TPB, intentions are defined as the indication of an individual's willingness to perform a given behavior, with research suggesting intentions account for 22% of the variance in behavior, on average (see Armitage & Conner, 2001, for a meta-analysis). Intentions, in turn, are proposed to be a function of three independent determinants. The first determinant of intentions is the person's attitude, conceptualized as the overall evaluation, either positive or negative, of performing the behavior of interest. The second determinant of intentions is subjective norm which reflects perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior. The third determinant of intentions is PBC which reflects the extent to which the behavior is perceived to be under volitional control. PBC also is argued to have a direct effect on behavior. On the basis on the TPB conceptualization of the decision-making process, individuals holding positive views toward a behavior, who think they have support from important persons in their lives to perform the behavior, and also perceive that performing the behavior is under their personal control are more likely to have strong intentions to perform the behavior.

In addition to the direct determinants of intentions and behavior, the TPB identifies the beliefs underpinning the constructs of attitude, subjective norm, and PBC (Ajzen, 1991). Specifically, an individual's attitude is proposed to be a function of salient behavioral beliefs, or the belief that outcomes associated with the behavior will occur (behavioral beliefs), weighted by evaluations of the pleasantness of each of the outcomes (outcome evaluations). Subjective norm is proposed to be a function of the extent to which other people would want the person to perform the behavior

(normative beliefs), weighted by his or her motivation to comply with each of these referents (motivation to comply). PBC is proposed to be a function of the beliefs concerning whether resources and opportunities are available to perform the behavior (control beliefs), weighted by the expected impact that these factors would have if they were to occur (perceived power). Thus, one of the major advantages of the TPB approach, inherent in its belief basis, is its ability to identify the underlying beliefs that distinguish between intenders and non-intenders (or, alternatively, those that perform or do not perform the behavior) for the specific behavior under investigation (see Fishbein & Stasson, 1990). In an organizational change context, the identification of beliefs that underlie the attitudes of employees towards a change initiative, as well as their feelings of normative pressure and PBC, may help change managers to develop a greater understanding of the psychological factors that distinguish between those employees who support the change and those who do not (see Peach, Jimmieson, & White, 2005).

insert Figure 1 about here

The TPB has been used extensively to successfully predict individual behavior in a variety of different settings (see Armitage & Conner, 2001), including the workplace, in which the TPB has been used to understand technology adoption (e.g., Rei, Lang, & Welker, 2002), worker intent towards an employee involvement program (e.g., Dawkins & Frass, 2005), and the utilization of structured interview techniques (e.g., van der Zee, Bakker, & Bakker, 2002). More recently, the TPB also has been used in an organizational change context as a way in which to understand change reactions among employees. In a sample of 149 employees about to undergo the first phase of an implementation process involving the relocation of their building to new premises, Jimmieson, Peach, and White (2008) investigated the extent to which the TPB variables predicted intentions of employees to behaviorally support the relocation. They found that employees who held favorable and positive views about the relocation, who perceived social pressure from others in the workplace to support the change, and believed that performing change-supportive behaviors was under their control reported stronger intentions to support the relocation.

The Role of Group Norm

Despite general support for the TPB, one aspect of the model that has been questioned is the role of subjective norm in explaining intentions and behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). Typically, average regression weights for attitude are consistently higher than for subjective norm in the prediction of intentions. For instance, in their meta-analysis, Armitage and Conner (2001) reported that the average contribution of attitude in predicting intentions was .49, whereas the average correlation between subjective norm and intentions was .34. On this basis, researchers have argued that the subjective norm-intention relationship is the weakest link of the TPB (e.g., Terry & Hogg, 1996). Ajzen argued that this general pattern of findings supports the position that intentions are influenced more by one's attitudes than perceptions of pressure from others. Alternatively, it has been argued that the conceptualization of the subjective norm construct is inadequate, where the narrow focus on perceived social pressure ineffectively captures the impact of social influences on intentions and behaviors (Terry & Hogg, 1996; Terry, Hogg, & White, 1999; White, Terry, & Hogg, 1994). In this respect, researchers have advocated that a consideration of the effects of group membership on intentions and behaviors, as outlined by social identity and self-categorization theories, may provide a more comprehensive explanation of the role of social influence.

The influence of group membership on the intention-behavior relationship can be explained through social identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988) and self-categorization (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) perspectives. According to these theories, when social identity is salient, the individual constructs context-specific group norms based on shared intra-group information and assimilates themselves to these group norms (Turner, 1982). Behavioral performance, therefore, is more likely to occur when there is normative support from a relevant reference group for performing the behavior than without in-group support (e.g., Terry & Hogg, 1996). Group norm involves a consideration of whether important group members perform the behavior and the evaluation of the behavior by the group. Thus, group norm is predicted to influence intentions and behaviors as the individual, based on their observations of group members, seeks to act in a manner similar with their in-group, thereby achieving categorization as a group member (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Turner et al., 1987).

Group norm differs from traditional measures of subjective norm within the TPB. The subjective norm construct reflects injunctive norms as the focus is on perceived social pressure from significant others to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Group norm, on the other hand, refers to the explicit or implicit prescriptions regarding appropriate attitudes and behaviors as a member of a specific reference group in a specific context (White, Hogg & Terry, 2002). Furthermore, according to Terry and colleagues (e.g., Terry & Hogg, 1996; Terry et al., 1999), a social identity theory and self-categorization theory perspective on the role of social influence in the attitude-behavior relationship differs significantly from that outlined in the TPB model. Rather than collapsing across referents, with social pressure conceived as being additive across all referents and reference groups that participants define as important to them, as in the case of subjective norm, group norm is conceived in a way so that it is intrinsically tied to contextually salient membership in specific social groups, and affects intentions and behaviors because the group is behaviorally relevant.

In relation to the present study, the impact of group norms emanating from a behaviorally-relevant group should be particularly relevant to the promotion and adoption of behaviors within an organizational change context. Organizational culture performs a number of functions within an organization including conveying a sense of identity for members and facilitating a commitment to something larger than self-interest (Robbins & Barnwell, 1994). As noted by several theorists who have applied social identity theory to organizational contexts, employees discern and interpret the behavior of others within a system of shared meaning and common understanding (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Haslam, Powell, & Turner, 2000; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Turner & Haslam, 2001). Thus, the perception that co-workers in one's immediate work environment are undertaking change-supportive behaviors should be integral in forming intentions to act. Although often measured in conjunction with group identification (e.g., Terry & Hogg, 1996), there is evidence of a direct influence of group norm on intentions in a range of behavioral contexts (e.g., Johnston & White, 2003). Thus, the present study includes a measure of group norm as a direct predictor of intentions. In this respect, the role of an important referent group for employees in the organization (in this case, employees from

their specific department) was examined in the present study in an effort to better understand intentions to support organizational change.

To summarize, in the present study, the following predictions were made. First, it was hypothesized that the three TPB variables (i.e., attitude, subjective norm, and PBC) would predict intentions to carry out behaviors that are supportive of the re-brand (Hypotheses 1 to 3, respectively). For the additional social influence variable examined, it was expected that employees would intend to perform re-brand behaviors when they perceived normative support from a relevant referent group (Hypothesis 4). TPB interventions designed to change intentions and behaviors typically focus on attitude, subjective norm, and PBC by targeting their respective underlying beliefs (see Ajzen, 2002a). Thus, in order to enable recommendations to be made to foster employee engagement in change supportive tasks, we used the TPB to identify and explore the differences in underlying belief structures related to the re-brand for high and low intenders.

Method

Organizational Context

This study took place in the serviced accommodation sector, an industry characterized by constant change in the diversification and expansion of the product range, particularly in regards to its most recognizable element, the hotel (Page, 2009). The change event under investigation was the re-brand of Hotel A to Hotel B. The re-brand involved the purchase of an independent hotel (Hotel A) by a real estate company which then appointed a brand management business to re-brand Hotel A into one of its hotel chains. The closure of Hotel A resulted in this particular hotel no longer having a presence in Australia. Thus, employees who were previously working for a small independent hotel were now working for a large international company that managed four different hotel co-brands with approximately 1,500 hotels in over 65 countries. Although the star rating for Hotels A and B was objectively the same, employees had an impression that the new hotel was lower in status and prestige. This impression was attributed to the fact that, of the four co-brands owned by the new parent company, Hotel B was considered to be a mid-scale brand whose target market was intra-regional and domestic travellers. Overall, therefore, the re-brand was a significant event for

employees, altering many work policies and procedures, as well as changes to cultural artefacts (e.g., new logos, décor, and uniforms) and job descriptions. At the time of questionnaire administration, the re-brand had been in place for 2 months and employees were being encouraged to adapt to the policies and procedures of Hotel B and become familiar with Hotel B's mission statement, core values, and new job roles and expectancies.

Sample

One hundred and eighty-eight questionnaires were distributed to all employees via attachment to pay slips. Eighty-two questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 44%. The sample consisted of a similar proportion of male (55%) and female (44%) employees (1 respondent failed to indicate his or her gender). The average age of employees was 34.92 years ($SD = 10.25$), ranging from 18 to 61 years. Employees in the sample had an average tenure of 3.32 years ($SD = 3.96$) with the hotel, ranging from 1 to 16 years. The modal response ($n = 40$) for tenure was 1 year. Participants were represented from all five departments across the hotel, with the majority located in the Front Office (20%), Housekeeping (22%), Food and Beverage Restaurant (18%), and Food and Beverage Kitchen (13%), reflecting the fact that more employees worked in these four areas. The remaining employees worked in a fifth department, comprising Human Resources (4%), Sales and Marketing (5%), Finance (1%), Security (5%), and Engineering (6%). Six percent of employees did not indicate their department.

Elicitation Study

In order to develop the indirect measures for the TPB variables (i.e., attitude, subjective norm, and PBC), an elicitation study was conducted with a group of workplace representatives, according to procedures outlined by Fishbein and Ajzen (1980). A sample of four female and four male employees who held representative positions across the hotel participated in a focus group. The mean age of this pilot group was 33.50 years (ranging from 25 to 55 years) and the average tenure was approximately 12 months (consistent with the modal response for tenure in the sample of 82). Open-ended questions asked pilot group members to list the main advantages and disadvantages of carrying out activities during the next 2 months that support the re-brand in order to elicit behavioral beliefs. The pilot

group also was asked which people or groups of people would approve or disapprove of them carrying out such activities. Control beliefs were established by asking pilot group members to list any factors or circumstances that would prevent or encourage them from carrying out activities during the next 2 months that are supportive of the hotel's re-brand. The modally salient underlying beliefs were tallied and the most frequently occurring underlying beliefs formed the basis for the indirect measures presented in the questionnaire.

Measures

Intentions. As part of the overall change management strategy, the hotel's Talent Development Manager (in conjunction with change management team) identified a range of specific activities that would be required of employees during the next 2 months of the re-brand (e.g., read my new job description, attend training and information sessions, and inform customers about the re-brand). Such behaviors were considered key to achieving support for the current phase of the change initiative and expectations in regards to performing these behaviors were communicated to all employees on the cover sheet of the questionnaire. Three items assessed the strength of intention to perform the target behavior (e.g., To what extent do you intend to carry out activities during the next 2 months that support the re-brand of Hotel A to Hotel B?). Items were worded in accord with Ajzen's (2002b) recommendations to incorporate elements of target, action, context, and time. All three items were measured on 7-point scales, ranging from 1 (e.g., *do not intend*) to 7 (e.g., *do intend*). The intentions measure had a Cronbach's (1951) alpha coefficient of .81.

Direct attitude. A direct measure of attitude towards carrying out activities during the next 2 months that supported the re-brand was obtained using ratings on a semantic differential format (Ajzen, 1991). Three items were used (i.e., *negative-positive*, *useless-useful*, *boring-exciting*), rated on a 1 to 7 scale. These items formed an internally consistent scale; Cronbach's (1951) alpha coefficient was .74.

Direct subjective norm. This construct was assessed using two items (e.g., "Most people who are important to me at work think that I should carry out activities during the next 2 months that support the re-brand."). Response options ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

These two items were significantly correlated with each other, $r = .52, p < .01$; Cronbach's (1951) alpha coefficient was .68.

Direct PBC. This variable was assessed with a single item (e.g., "I have complete control whether I carry out activities in the next 2 months that support the re-brand.") on a response scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Group norm. Discussions with the pilot group revealed that the most behaviorally-relevant reference group was employees in their own department. Pilot group members indicated that it was employees from their specific department with whom they were most likely to make comparisons (as opposed to employees in the hotel as a whole). Thus, for the measure of group norm, participants rated their perceptions of how many of the employees in their department they thought would carry out activities during the next 2 months supportive of the re-brand, ranging from 1 (*all*) to 7 (*none*). A second item asked what percentage of employees in their department they thought would carry out re-brand-related activities during the next 2 months, ranging from 1 (*0%*) to 7 (*100%*). These two items were significantly correlated with each other, $r = .89, p < .01$; Cronbach's (1951) alpha coefficient was .94.

Belief-based attitude. The belief-based or indirect measure of attitude was obtained using eight behavioral belief items and eight outcome evaluation items (see Table 3). Behavioral beliefs (identified through the elicitation study) were assessed by asking participants to rate how likely it would be that eight consequences (four benefits and four costs) would occur if they performed the target behavior of carrying out activities during the next 2 months that supported the re-brand. The consequences were rated on a series of 7-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 7 (*extremely likely*). Responses for the four costs were reverse-scored. For the measure of outcome evaluations, participants rated how pleasant or unpleasant they felt the eight consequences of the target behavior would be on a series of 7-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 (*extremely unpleasant*) to 7 (*extremely pleasant*). The overall indirect measure of attitude was obtained by multiplying each participant's behavioral belief items by their adjacent outcome evaluations items, and then averaging these scores.

Belief-based subjective norm. The belief-based measure of subjective norm was obtained using seven normative beliefs and seven motivation to comply items (see Table 3). Normative beliefs (identified through the elicitation study) were assessed by asking respondents to rate how likely seven referents within the workplace would think that they should carry out activities during the next 2 months that supported the re-brand. Response options ranged from 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 7 (*extremely likely*). Motivation to comply was measured by participants indicating how willing they were to comply, in general, with each of the seven listed referents on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). The overall belief-based measure of subjective norm was calculated by multiplying each participant's normative belief items by their motivation to comply items, and then averaging these scores.

Belief-based PBC. A belief-based measure of PBC was obtained via assessment of control beliefs and perceived power (see Table 3). Control beliefs (identified through the elicitation study) were assessed by asking participants to rate the extent to which seven barriers that would prevent them from carrying out activities during the next 2 months that supported the re-brand were likely to occur on a scale from 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 7 (*extremely likely*). Perceived power was measured by asking participants to rate the extent to which these factors would prevent them from carrying out the target behavior, on a scale from 1 (*not prevent me at all*) to 7 (*prevent me completely*). The overall belief-based measure of PBC was obtained by multiplying the control belief items by the associated perceived power items for each participant, and then averaging these scores.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the variables are reported in Table 1. Gender and tenure were unrelated to the focal variables; however, there were two significant correlations involving age and the predictor variables (see Table 1). In this respect, older employees reported more favorable attitudes and higher levels of PBC than younger staff members.

insert Table 1 about here

TPB Variables in the Prediction of Intentions

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis examined the extent to which the TPB variables predicted intentions to carry out re-brand activities (see Table 2). To ensure that gender, age, and tenure did not influence the results, these demographic variables were entered at Step 1 of the analysis. As can be seen in Table 2, gender, age, and tenure were not related to intentions, $R^2 = .04$, $F(3, 70) = 0.90$, *NS*. Entry of the TPB variables at Step 2 accounted for a significant increment of variance in the intentions scores, $R^2_{ch.} = .60$, $F(4, 66) = 22.69$, $p < .001$. Both attitude, $\beta = .33$, $p < .01$, and subjective norm, $\beta = .42$, $p < .001$, emerged as significant predictors of intentions (Hypotheses 1 & 2, respectively). Employees who held positive attitudes toward performing behaviors that supported the re-brand and who perceived pressure from others to complete the required activities were more likely to intend to carry out activities related to the re-brand. There was, however, no support for the role of PBC on intentions (Hypothesis 3). In line with Hypothesis 4, there was evidence to suggest that group norm, $\beta = .18$, $p < .05$, had a positive role to play in predicting employees' intentions to support the re-brand.

insert Table 2 about here

Differences Between Moderate and High Intenders on Belief-Based Measures

For organizational change management strategies to be targeted toward addressing disparities that exist between current beliefs held by employees and desired organizational goals, analyses were conducted on the indirect measures of attitude, subjective norm, and PBC to examine their effects on intentions. First, it is of interest to note that the relationship between the direct and the corresponding belief-based measures of attitude, subjective norm, and PBC were related. Significant positive correlations were found between the direct and belief-based measures of attitude, $r = .62$, $p < .001$, and subjective norm, $r = .60$, $p < .001$. As would be expected, a significant negative correlation between PBC and its indirect measure was found, $r = -.52$, $p < .01$ (i.e., the more barriers employees envisaged occurring with greater impact to impede behavioral performance, the weaker their perceptions of control over performing change-supportive behaviors). Next, six one-way multivariate analyses of variance were performed using intentions as the independent variable and the belief-based measures as the dependent variables (i.e., behavioral beliefs, outcome evaluations, normative beliefs,

motivation to comply, control beliefs, and perceived power). These analyses are depicted in Table 3. Due to the negatively skewed distribution of the intentions measure, the scale mid-point (on a 7-point scale) did not divide the sample evenly. Thus, a dichotomous independent variable was computed by dividing the intentions scale (median = 6.33) at the median point. In this manner, the distribution was split into high intenders and those with relatively lower, or moderate, intentions.

insert Table 3 about here

Behavioral beliefs. Using Wilk's criterion, there was a significant multivariate effect of intentions, $F(8, 70) = 2.14, p < .05, \eta^2 = .20$. As shown in Table 3, univariate tests indicated that employees with stronger intentions differed significantly in their assessment of the benefits associated with carrying out activities during the next 2 months that support the re-brand from those employees with moderate intentions. In contrast, the costs associated with supporting the re-brand did not differentiate between high and moderate intenders.

Outcome evaluations. There also was a significant multivariate effect of intentions, $F(8, 70) = 4.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = .35$, on outcome evaluations. Again, significant univariate tests revealed that it was the benefits that significantly differentiated high and moderate intenders in regards to performing change-supportive activities. In this respect, stronger intenders differed from employees with comparatively lower intentions in their gaining pleasure from and valuing the positive outcomes. There were no differences between intention groups for the costs associated with supporting the re-brand.

Normative beliefs. There was a significant multivariate effect of intentions, $F(7, 73) = 5.75, p < .001, \eta^2 = .36$, on normative beliefs. With the exception of company management, the results of univariate analyses revealed that employees with strong intentions were more likely to perceive that the Hotel B management team, their supervisor, fellow departmental colleagues, other hotel staff, friends, and customers would approve of them carrying out tasks that prepare them for working in the new hotel, compared to employees with comparatively weaker intentions.

Motivation to comply. There also was a significant multivariate effect of intentions, $F(7, 72) = 5.17, p < .001, \eta^2 = .34$, on motivation to comply. Results of univariate analyses indicated that

employees with stronger intentions were significantly more motivated to comply with the perceived expectations of all seven referents.

Control beliefs. The multivariate effect of intentions on control beliefs was significant, $F(7, 71) = 3.98, p < .001, \eta^2 = .28$; employees with strong intentions were less likely to see (a) a lack of influence over the re-brand, (b) a lack of personal motivation, and (c) the presence of negative rumors as barriers to performing activities related to the re-brand, whereas these barriers were more likely to prevent moderate intenders from supporting the change.

Perceived power. Last, the multivariate effect of intentions on perceived power was significant, $F(7, 72) = 2.89, p < .01, \eta^2 = .22$. Again, employees with strong intentions (compared to those with more moderate intentions) were less likely to see a lack of influence and motivation, and the presence of negative rumors as barriers to performing change-supportive activities.

Discussion

The results of the present study illustrate evidence in line with the hypotheses, confirming the utility of the TPB to explain the main effects underlying the intentions of employees to engage in activities that support a change initiative. When the three TPB variables were considered as a set, the direct measures of attitude and subjective norm (but not PBC) emerged as predictors of employees' intentions to carry out activities during the next 2 months that supported the re-brand (Hypotheses 1 & 2). Specifically, employees with a favorable attitude towards performing the target behavior and who perceived pressure from personally important referents were more likely to intend to engage in re-brand supportive activities. Together, attitude and subjective norm (and group norm) accounted for 60% of the variance in employees' intentions to carry out activities supportive of the change. These findings concur with the theoretical underpinnings of the TPB and are consistent with previous research examining the utility of the model (see Armitage & Conner, 2001) and, in particular, the prediction of intentions in organizational change contexts (e.g., Jimmieson et al., 2008). These findings provide useful information for change management strategies designed to encourage change-supportive behaviors among employees. In this respect, targeting the personal attitudes of employees

and their perceptions of pressure from others to perform the behaviors are useful ways to encourage the uptake of change-supportive behaviors.

Interestingly, the subjective norm regression coefficient was a strong predictor of intentions and is somewhat contrary to previous studies that have reported the subjective norm-intentions relationship to be the weakest link of the TPB model (Ajzen, 1991; Armitage & Conner, 2001). It is likely that, in behavioral contexts where there are dependent relationships, such as for employees where there is potential for reward (e.g., pay or promotion) and punishment (e.g., censure, demotion, or job loss) based on job performance, perceived pressure from a range of important others is a strong predictor of intentions to engage in certain behaviors at work. It is important to consider the extent to which subjective norm replicates group norm, given that, in the work context, employees are likely to make reference to their work group when thinking about important others who would approve of them performing the target behavior. Thus, in our study, subjective norm may have more effectively captured the effects of group membership on behavioral intentions compared to previous TPB research (see Terry & Hogg, 1996; Terry, Hogg, & White, 1999). Nevertheless, it is important to note that subjective norm assesses perceived pressure to perform the target behavior, whereas group norm taps the perceived number of individuals in the group who are likely to comply with the target behavior. This conceptual distinction is supported empirically by the moderate correlation between subjective norm and group norm.

Inconsistent with the TPB theorizing, PBC (Hypothesis 3) was not predictive of change-supportive intentions. The elevated variance accounted for by employees' attitude and subjective norm perceptions suggests that the level of personal control over performing the target behavior may not have been integral in understanding their intentions to support the re-brand. This notion is supported by Ajzen (1991) who advised that the relative importance of the three TPB variables is expected to vary across behaviors and situations and, thus, in some contexts, only one or two of the variables is sufficient to have a significant impact on intentions. The lower mean for PBC (in comparison to attitude and subjective norm) also suggests that employees may have believed that they had little discretion over subsequent change-related activities, given that such activities were core to

their job requirements and performance. Nevertheless, a limitation of the present study was the use of a single item to assess PBC. Thus, failure to demonstrate stronger effects for PBC in the prediction of intentions also might be attributable to inadequate conceptualization of this construct. Furthermore, the PBC construct may be multidimensional. For instance, Kraft, Rise, Sutton, and Roysamb (2005) conducted a confirmatory factor analysis and argued that PBC could be conceived as consisting of three inter-related factors; namely, perceived control, perceived confidence, and perceived difficulty. It is suggested that future research adopts this approach to the measurement of PBC.

Results of the present study also corroborated the argument for the examination of social influence in the TPB from social identity and self-categorization perspectives. In line with Hypothesis 4, there was evidence to suggest that group norm was related to intentions. Employees' intentions to support the re-brand were more likely when they perceived that colleagues in their department also would engage in change-supportive activities. These findings are consistent with previous research where both subjective norm and group norm have been shown to independently predict intentions (e.g., Johnson & White, 2003). These findings highlight the importance of colleagues during times of change for providing normative information that the individual uses when deciding how to behave. Thus, change management interventions designed to foster favorable group norms are likely to assist in developing stronger intentions to support a specific change event. When activities reinforce and induce commitment to a behaviorally-relevant reference group, then it is likely that performance of desired behaviors will become normative in the social work environment and be maintained over time. The presence of a supportive behaviorally-relevant group norm also may prevent positive attitudes and behaviors from eroding over time, due to group membership providing a continual reference for appropriate and desired conduct in the work environment. Thus, the use of group- or team-based interventions during times of organizational change are likely to be integral to maximizing long-term change implementation success.

Applied Implications

In an exploratory manner, mean differences in the underlying behavioral, normative, and control beliefs between high and moderate intenders were examined. This analysis allows for

recommendations to be suggested in relation to strategies for encouraging greater commitment by those employees less inclined to engage in specific change-supportive behaviors identified by the organization. In the first instance, for beliefs underlying attitude, it was the benefits that significantly differentiated high and moderate intenders in regards to performing change-supportive activities. This pattern of results suggests that strategies should focus on the positive outcomes of performing activities about the re-brand. Thus, attempts to foster such behaviors should focus on the positive outcomes of these behaviors (rather than challenging feelings about the negative).

In relation to normative beliefs, it is interesting to note that there was no significant difference between high and moderate intenders in regards to company management. Thus, this particular referent group appeared to have no bearing on creating a sense of high and moderate support for the change among employees. This finding could be attributed to the fact that company management (which represented the senior executive management team of the new parent company) was less visible to employees and removed from the day-to-day operations of the new hotel. Nevertheless, for the remaining work referents, more reticent employees would benefit from the impression that the hotel management team, supervisors, colleagues and friends (within and across departments), and customers would approve of them engaging in change-supportive behaviors. In a similar vein, any strategies should attempt to encourage employees' motivation to comply with the expectations of management and staff at all levels of the organizational hierarchy, as well as customers.

Finally, regarding the beliefs underlying PBC, change management strategies should target those employees who believe that there are certain barriers to engaging in supportive behaviors (in this case, lack of opportunities to influence changes, lack of motivation, and presence of negative rumors). Initiatives to combat these barriers could include ensuring that employees have the ability to be involved in decision-making processes related to the change and working towards quelling workplace rumors by providing regular updates throughout the change implementation process. Furthermore, strategies should encourage employees to believe that such barriers should not prevent them from engaging in re-brand activities.

Methodological Limitations

Several methodological limitations of the present study should be considered when interpreting these results. First, the research was conducted in just one hotel of the serviced accommodation sector which limits generalization of the results to other types of organizations and industries. Another methodological limitation is the fact that the data are cross-sectional in nature. As such, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions about the direction of the relationships among the focal variables. It is important that future research seeks to establish temporal relationships among the TPB variables, given that employees' view of the change event may alter over the course of the implementation process (see Piderit, 2000). The results reported in this study also should be tempered by the same-source and self-report approach. Actual behaviors carried out in relation to the re-brand during the specified 2-month time period also were not measured. Thus, future studies should overcome this design short-coming in order to demonstrate the full capacity of the TPB to predict both intentions and subsequent behaviors of employees in relation to a change event. Objective assessments of behaviors required of employees during the process of organizational change (via supervisor and customer ratings, for example) also might be collected to improve the methodological strength of research of this nature. Nevertheless, assessment of employees' intentions to engage in re-brand activities does serve as a reliable indicator of what employees will actually do during subsequent implementation of the change, as the robustness of the intention-behavior relationship has been demonstrated in an array of studies assessing the utility of the TPB (see Armitage & Conner, 2001). Another direction for future research would be a consideration of the extent to which groups develop shared beliefs about the TPB variables and group norm in the context of intentions to support organizational change. The present study was limited to an individual-level analysis but it is important to recognize that there are other units of analysis that also are affected when organizations initiate change, particularly at the level of the group which is in line with some recent work in the field (e.g., Caldwell Herold, & Fedor 2004; Fedor, Caldwell, & Herold, 2006).

Conclusion

Overall, the present study tested the utility of an extended TPB model, incorporating group norm, in the prediction of employees' intentions to support a specific change event underway in their

organization. While readiness for change depends on a variety of content, process, context, and individual factors (Holt et al., 2007), the TPB can provide organizations with an early indication of employee beliefs and determinants of their intentions prior to change implementation. In this way, the TPB provides a unique contribution to our understanding organizational change by adopting a theoretical approach that has predictive power, thereby validating the importance of focusing on the determinants of employees' intentions when managing organizational change projects. For these reasons, it is recommended that the utility of the TPB be examined in future research as a basis for understanding employee responses to change.

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Table 1

Descriptive Data (Means and Standard Deviations) and Intercorrelations Among the Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	1.44	0.50								
2. Age	34.92	10.25	-.11							
3. Tenure	3.32	3.96	.24*	.18						
4. Direct attitude	5.76	1.18	.05	.24*	.00					
5. Direct subjective norm	5.63	1.35	.14	.17	.13	.64**				
6. Direct PBC	4.31	2.09	.05	.29**	.04	.27*	.18			
7. Group norm	5.65	1.30	.05	.03	-.05	.31**	.31**	.12		
8. Intentions	5.90	1.21	.03	.16	-.04	.68**	.68**	.24*	.42**	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 2

Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Intentions

Predictor	<i>B</i>	β
<u>Step 1</u>		
Gender	.19	.08
Age	.02	.19
Tenure	-.03	-.09
R^2	.04	
<u>Step 2</u>		
Direct attitude	.34	.33**
Direct subjective norm	.38	.42***
Direct PBC	.03	.06
Group norm	.17	.18*
$R^2_{ch.}$.60***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Mean Scores in Underlying Beliefs for Moderate and High Intenders

	Intentions	
	Moderate	High
Behavioral beliefs (benefits and costs)	<i>n</i> = 37	<i>n</i> = 42
Up-to-date about re-brand (benefit)	5.43	6.26***
Increase awareness of Hotel B processes (benefit)	5.35	6.19**
Hotel B will be more team oriented (benefit)	5.08	6.05***
Consistency of standards across hotels (benefit)	5.05	6.05***
Provided with contradicting information (cost)	4.24	3.74
Feel overwhelmed by information (cost)	4.03	3.83
Waste time on unhelpful activities (cost)	3.24	2.83
My workload will increase (cost)	4.73	4.98
Outcome evaluations	<i>n</i> = 37	<i>n</i> = 42
Up-to-date about re-brand (benefit)	5.03	6.05***
Increase awareness of Hotel B processes (benefit)	5.27	6.24***
Hotel B will be more team oriented (benefit)	4.78	6.12***
Consistency of standards across hotels (benefit)	5.03	6.33***
Provided with contradicting information (cost)	4.08	3.36
Feel overwhelmed by information (cost)	4.16	3.45
Waste time on unhelpful activities (cost)	3.41	2.83
My workload will increase (cost)	4.08	3.93
Normative beliefs (referents)	<i>n</i> = 38	<i>n</i> = 43
Company management	6.00	6.53
Hotel B management team	6.29	6.81***
My supervisor	5.87	6.65***
Staff in department	5.00	6.26***
Staff in department different to my own	4.37	5.98***
Friends working at Hotel B	4.37	5.91***
Customers	4.61	6.51***
Motivation to comply	<i>n</i> = 38	<i>n</i> = 42
Company management	5.26	6.60***
Hotel B management team	5.47	6.71***
My supervisor	5.84	6.69***
Staff in department	5.21	6.45***
Staff in department different to my own	4.68	6.02***
Friends working at Hotel B	4.89	5.98**
Customers	5.79	6.60**
Control beliefs (barriers)	<i>n</i> = 38	<i>n</i> = 41
Lack of information	4.45	3.68
Lack of support from management	4.63	3.93
Lack of opportunities to influence changes	4.55	3.34**
Lack of motivation	4.61	2.73***
Lack of time due to busy workload	5.05	4.12
Tension among employees	4.37	3.73
Negative rumors	4.18	3.37*
Perceived power	<i>n</i> = 38	<i>n</i> = 42
Lack of information	4.13	4.36
Lack of support from management	4.63	4.19
Lack of opportunities to influence changes	4.42	3.52*
Lack of motivation	4.42	3.45*
Lack of time due to busy workload	4.42	4.00
Tension among employees	3.45	3.36
Negative rumors	4.00	3.12*

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

Figure Caption

Figure 1. The Theory of Planned Behavior (based on Ajzen, 1991).